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SCRUTATOR'S QUERY,

^K
Respecting the

E X T E N T

O F O U R

Blessed Saviour's Death,

RE-PROPOSED;

With Responsor's Answer to it ; Scrutator's Reply
to Responsor ; Observator's Remarks on both ;
and Scrutator's Answer to Observator.

To which are prefixed,

SCRUTATOR'S REASONS for proposing
the Query at first.

Recommended to the Consideration of the Candid Reader.

By Æ Q U U S.

Αληθευόντες εν αγαπη. — P A U L.

L E E D S :

Printed by G. WRIGHT and SON. Price One Penny.

SECURITATON QUERY

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Scrutator's Query, &c.

My Dear Friend Æquus,

I HAVE no objection to gratifying your curiosity, in giving you the reason of my late Query in the public papers; nor of submitting the few Epistles occasioned by it to your disposal, as I have confidence in you that you will not, deliberately, take any step which is unlikely to promote the great end of our existence, and our holy calling, viz. the glorifying of our gracious God and Saviour.

The occasion of my query was this. Having seen the three pamphlets of Philalethes, Calvinisticus, and the author of Polyphemus, I could not but be greatly affected, not only with much of the matter contained in them, but more especially with the manner and spirit in which they were wrote; especially Polyphemus.

"What," says my agitated mind, do these poor men think of? Have they not heard? Have they not read, that the God of truth is also the God of righteousness, and the God of love? Do they not know that christians, and especially ministers, ought to be "gentle towards all men." Are they so far departed from the spirit of christianity, that they have forgotten even the dictates of natural religion? Can they be ignorant that "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," is fundamental to probity and uprightness. Does christianity, does natural religion teach us to "render evil for evil, and railing for railing?" Can the language of Billingsgate ornament their page, or give cogency to their arguments? Can they not state and vindicate the truths of God, unless they adopt the me-

thod of Satan, "the accuser of the brethren?" But I have done.—How far the arguments of these gentlemen, on the one side, or the other, stript of this hateful and infectious dress, are calculated to answer any valuable purpose; how far they are calculated to ease the anxious mind, to instruct the ignorant enquirer, or to place divine truth on its own proper basis, you, and other candid and judicious readers, have, undoubtedly, long since determined.

Reluctant, as I am, to controversy, and engaged as I am, in employments of a very different kind; I could not forbear wishing that some friend of truth and love would introduce a method of proceeding more directly suited to answer the above important ends. And not knowing of any one who intended to undertake the task, I ventured upon it myself; and assumed the freedom of proposing a query, which, in my humble opinion, might contribute to excite a discussion of the subjects in question, in a natural, easy, and instructive manner. This Query was published in the Leeds Intelligencer, Aug. 15, 1780. I neither expected nor intended that subjects of this kind should be thoroughly discussed in a Newspaper. And the Printers signified their desire to be excused from what might lead to a *Newspaper War*. Thus, my good Sir, you see the matter at large. If you think the publication of this, and the following letters, will subserve any valuable sacred purposes, you have my consent. May truth, love, peace, and holiness prevail more and more! May your soul ever prosper in the divine life. And may the God of love be ever glorified in all your designs and pursuits. I am, my dear friend, yours, affectionately, in the adorable Jesus.

SCRUTATOR.

To

To the Printers of the Leeds Intelligencer.

S I R S,

IBEG leave, through the channel of your valuable paper, to propose one Query to your ingenious correspondents, viz. What christian writer first maintained, that Jesus Christ, the blessed Son of God, did not lay down his life for the sins of all mankind? I have read the scriptures more than once; but I cannot find it asserted there; and, though I don't profess myself an Antiquarian, yet I think, I can venture to affirm, that we have no evidence of a writer in the first centuries, abetting this strange opinion. If any of your learned acquaintance will give an answer to the above Query in your paper, they will very much oblige,

*Sirs, your constant Reader,***SCRUTATOR.**

LEEDS INTELLIGENCER, Aug. 15, 1780.

For the Leeds Intelligencer.

PLEASE to be so obliging as insert the following, in answer to Scrutators Query in your paper of the 15th of August, viz. "What christian writer first maintained that Jesus Christ, the blessed Son of God, did not lay down his life for the sins of all mankind." In answer to this curious querist, I beg leave to inform him, that the first christian writers, that I know of, who maintained this doctrine, were the Apostles of Christ himself. — And this strange opinion, as that gentleman calls it, they seem not only to have learned from the Psalmist and other Old Testament Saints, but even from their blessed master himself. But assertions without proofs, stand for nothing. — Therefore I shall only quote a few, as a newspaper will not admit of enlargements. In psalm xxxiv. 22. David tells us, "The Lord redeemeth the
souls

souls of his servants." Not the souls of all men, for he tells us, evil shall slay the wicked, ver. 21. Our blessed Redeemer likewise tells his disciples, John x. 11. "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." But pray who are the sheep? Are all men of that denomination? No certainly. The contrary is clear from the context, particularly from the 27th and 28th verse. But if he had laid down his life for all men, what occasion would there have been for mentioning his sheep in particular? This might have been sufficient for the Apostles maintaining that Christ only died for the sins of his own people, supposing they had never been taught it by any future inspiration; yet being under the spirit's infallible direction, we find them under his divine influence, maintain the same doctrine, and even in the first century, altho' Scrutator "can venture to affirm, we have no evidence of a writer in the first centuries abetting this strange opinion." But let the evidence of Paul be here called in, who in his exhortation to the elders of the church at Ephesus, Acts xx. 28. desires them to "feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." By the church of God, we can neither here understand all men universally, nor all in communion with the visible church of Christ upon earth; but only real Saints who belong to the church invisible, as is evident from Ephes. v. 23—27. where Christ is declared to be the head of the church, and the saviour of the body; and the church to be subject unto him; and that he loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word: that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." But will Mr. Scrutator aver, that all mankind belong to the church of Christ, or that, the blessed privileges mentioned above can be conferred on any but real christians? If he does, I think he will find it a difficult point to prove.

I shall

I shall only mention other two texts, (altho' several others might be brought with equal perspecuity) viz. Rev. v. 9. "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." And chap. xiv. 3, 4. No man could learn the song; but the hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth: These were redeemed from among men: But if Christ by his blood, redeemed every individual of the human race, how could the Saints before the throne sing "thou hast redeemed us out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,—and from among men?" For to make Christ redeem the whole, and then make part of them sing, they were redeemed out of, and from among the rest, would be flat contradiction and nonsense.

Here, I hope Mr Scrutator, has his query answered.

I am, Sir, &c.

RESPONSOR.

Leeds Intelligencer, Sept. 5, 1780.

To Mr. RESPONSOR.

SIR,

IBEG your acceptance of my grateful acknowledgments, for the pains you have taken in answering my query of August 15th. But you will take it in good part, if I tell you that your answer does not furnish my mind with conviction that the holy writers have, in any place, limited the death of Christ to a part of mankind. If you could mention one single text where such a limitation is plainly expressed, I hope I should embrace the doctrine with humble pleasure. I believe what my Saviour does is right; and what he speaks is truth. His death for the sins of men is the leading subject in the gospel, 1 Cor. xv. 3. and shines with an awful glory on every other part of it. So that every circumstance relative to it, necessary for us to know, is undoubtedly made plain

plain to the meanest capacities. Because the scriptures are written for the lowest of mankind,—and every one, where they are known, is required to believe and practice them. It would therefore be a shocking reflection upon the author of them, if they were not, on these subjects, quite plain. I must be persuaded, therefore, that a doctrine of such solemn consequence as the extent of our Saviour's death, is clearly revealed in them. But I don't wish these remarks to preclude the examination of what you have written on the subject.

Psalms xxxiv. 22. is so foreign to this subject, and has, so evidently, no relation to the death of Jesus, that I shall be excused in passing it by, as a manifest, though very pardonable slip of your pen. Do you think, Sir, that John x. 11. can, by any good rule of interpretation, be understood to express a limitation of our Saviour's death? If you do, I desire you would inform me what that rule is, and how you exemplify it in the present case. Might not our Lord say, with the strictest truth, “the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,” even though he died for all men? For if he died for all, he certainly died for his sheep.—Is there any thing in the context, in the design, or the occasion of that discourse, which can lead us to imagine that our Saviour here intended to fix the limits or extent of his death? Or, is there any expression that necessarily implies limitation in the words themselves? Was not our Lord here shewing the difference between himself, and false teachers, or shepherds, in order to engage the attention of the Jews to himself, and to draw or keep them from those selfish deceivers whom he is comparing himself with? That while *they* devour and destroy *their* sheep, *he* loves and dies for *his*? Does not the expression, in this view, appear with a delightful propriety, and yet in a perfect consistency with his dying for all men, admitting that to be the truth?

Is it not evident from the whole context,—the occasion,—the design,—the persons addressed,—and from every circumstance,—that the church spoke of in Acts

xx. 28. neither means the visible nor invisible church universal, but the church at Ephesus *only*? And might not any minister, with the utmost propriety, address the elders of any church at LEEDS, BRADFORD, HALIFAX, or elsewhere, in the same language, and never think of any limitation?

Is there any exclusive phrase used in Ephes. v. 25. Is it not a most beautiful representation of the love of Jesus to his church, that is, to all *true believers*, or real *christians*, as you very justly explain the word *church*? But was there any necessity to fix the limits or extent of our Lord's death, in such a view as this? Or is there a single word that expresses limitation, in the expressions of the Apostle? Is not every word true, and proper, and consistent, even though our Saviour died for all mankind? Suppose a person reads in scripture, that Jesus Christ is *man*, and from thence denies his Godhead, and infers he is *only* man. Is the inference just? No, say you and I; for though he is called man, he is never said to be *man only*. May we not reason with the like propriety here? He gave himself for the church; but it is never said that he gave himself for the church *only*. Therefore we have no authority to believe it.

Your remark on Rev. v. 9. xiv. 3, 4; appears to be founded on a supposition that Christ dying for men, and redeeming them, are synonymous terms; or, at least, that they are inseparable, and of equal extent: Which supposition, with deference to your judgment, Sir, I think, has no countenance from scripture. It appears to me that *redemption*, as the term is used in scripture, signifies deliverance in general, whatever subject it be applied to. We have but one definition of *gospel* redemption in the bible, that I, at present recollect; and that is the "forgiveness of sins," Col. i. 14. or a deliverance from the curse, to which we have all, by sin, exposed ourselves. Christ obtained this redemption for us. Heb. ix. 12. This blessing, as well as justification, and every other, believers enjoy, by, or through

the death of Christ. If this be a scriptural account of redemption, as, I believe, you will find it to be, then, is it not evident Rev. v. 9. xiv. 3, 4, can furnish no argument for the purpose you produce it for? I recommend this subject, Sir, to your farther consideration; and wish you to take along with you, such passages as Exod. vi. 6. 2 Sam. vii. 23. 1 Chron. xvii. 21. Job v. 20. vi. 23. Psal. xxv. 22. xxvi. 11. xlv. 26. xlix. 15. lxxix. 13. lxxii. 14. Isai. i. 2. Jer. xv. 21. Hos. xiii. 14. Mic. iv. 10. Col. i. 14. Heb. ix. 12, &c.

I shall only add, that I shall be much obliged to you, or to any gentleman of capacity and leisure, for a full answer to my first Query, in the sense in which I proposed it. I am still persuaded the sacred writers were totally ignorant of the doctrine you wish to defend. If you chuse to examine the matter farther, my prayer shall be for you, that you may do it under the divine direction and influence. I intreat the same favor from you, in behalf of,

Dear Sir, your sincere well-wisher,

SCRUTATOR.

Leeds Intelligencer, Sept. 19, 1789.

TO SCRUTATOR.

SIR,

IAM an intire stranger both to you and *Responser*, but not wholly so to the controverly agitated betwixt you. I have read your letters in the *Intelligencer*, and think they are not calculated for much usefulness, but rather lay a foundation for endless dispute. But, however, if you are both disposed to carry on the debate, you should state the point in question more clearly, or else, in my opinion, you'll rather confuse than instruct your readers. And as you have asserted that there is a difference

difference betwixt Christ dying for persons, and redeeming them, you should point out the difference, and tell *Responfor* plainly what idea you intend to convey when you speak of the death of Christ. Do you mean that his death was an atonement for sin? Or a price paid for sinners? Or a satisfaction to justice, or was it a reconciliation? And if it was, who was reconciled by it? If you comply with this request, *Responfor* will know where to find you.

O B S E R V A T O R.

Leeds Intelligencer, for Sept. 26, 1780.

N. B. The following answer to *Observer* was sent to the Printer, to be published on the 3d of October; but was laid aside by him.

T O O B S E R V A T O R.

Dear Sir,

I AM not conscious of any intention to offend you, or any man living. But, I must confess I can hardly admire your complaisance to my unknown friend *Responfor*, in supposing that he does not understand my meaning, or *find me*, as you are pleased to express it. Nor does it seem very polite not to give him liberty to mention his own difficulties, if he have any. I freely grant that when a prudent friend is kind enough to suggest a hint, by way of caution or admonition, it ought to be taken in good part. And I trust both *Responfor* and myself shall endeavour to make a proper use of your's; though, I should imagine, we neither of us apprehend much necessity for it. The point in question appears to be very clear. *Responfor* asserts that "the Apostles of Christ maintained that Jesus Christ, the blessed Son of God, did not lay down his life for the sins of all mankind."

kind." The truth of this position, I venture to call in question. *Responfor* has nothing to do but to make it good. When he has done that, the matter is decided, and the debate ends. You think our letters "are not calculated for much usefulness." But I hope, you will allow that the subject on which we write is of infinite consequence.

I am, Sir,

Your sincere well-wisher,

SCRUTATOR.

TO ÆQUUS.

THUS, my dear ÆQUUS, I have gratified your desire; and laid before you the whole of what has passed between, *Responfor*, *Observer*, and myself. If you, or *Responfor*, or any other person of equal candor, learning and judgment, shall chuse to examine the matter, and answer my first Query, or take any other eligible and christian method of setting the point in question in its proper light, I shall thank you for your labors of love to a poor dark world. May he "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," shine more abundantly into your heart and mine, and into the hearts of all our readers! and hereby give us more of the "knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

I am, sincerely and affectionately, your's,

SCRUTATOR.

F I N I S.